



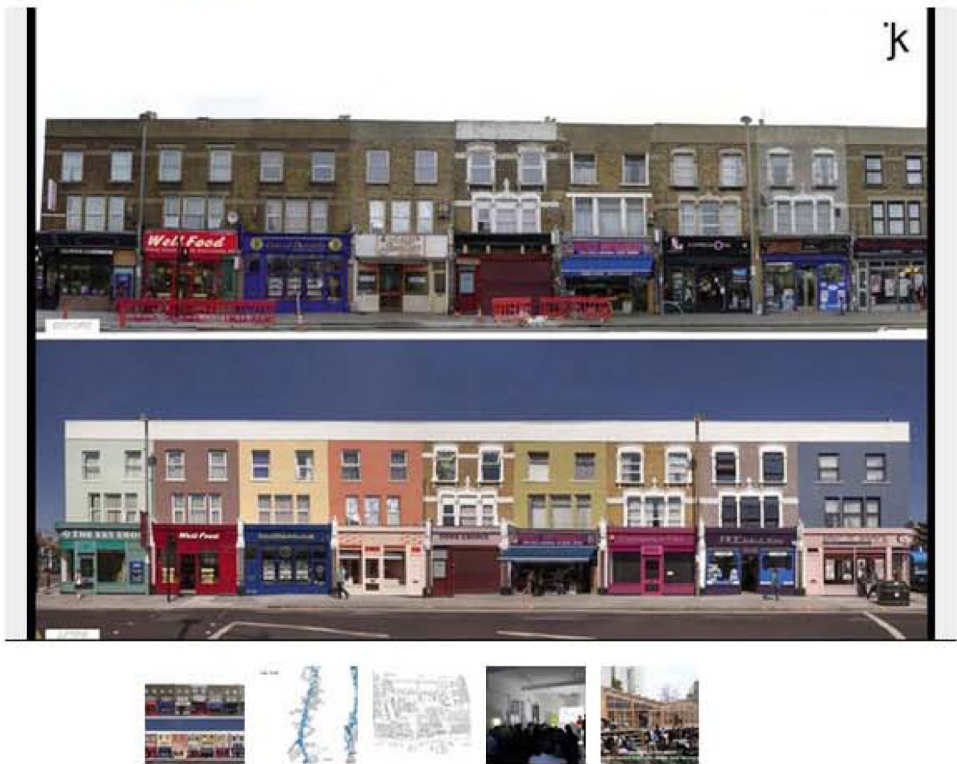
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Pecha Kucha: Seven approaches to sustainability across the capital

30 April, 2014 | By [Hattie Hartman](#)

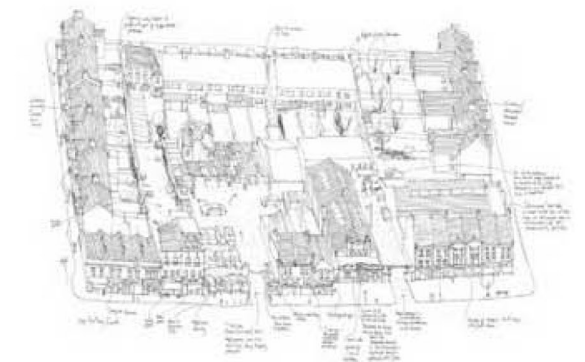


Hattie Hartman reports from Open-City's own Green Sky Thinking event

Open-City's own Green Sky Thinking event, a pacy PechaKucha hosted by SCIN Gallery, featured seven practices with seven different takes on sustainability. Introducing the evening, The Guardian's Ollie Wainwright challenged the presenters, disparaging sustainability as a 'turn-off' with moral overtones equivalent to goodness.

Tim Stonor of Space Syntax did some future-gazing, highlighting global urban trends such as slowing down (cycling), multi-tasking (stacking mixed uses in Singapore), and doing more with less (the San Francisco maker movement). Stonor concluded with a call for 'bold thinking,' exemplified by Foster + Partners SkyCycle proposal, for which Space Syntax is member of the project team.

Having recently visited both the New York High Line and the newly-opened southern area of the Olympic Park, the appeal of bold thinking is clear. Exhilarating in both its urban setting and its immaculate detail, the High Line is a triumph while the budget constraints of south park render it a missed opportunity. Could SkyCycle be sutured over London's train lines to create an exhilarating and safe cycleway while also regenerating neighbourhood nodes at key access points in the way that the High Line has impacted New York's Chelsea?



Gort Scott high street study

The theme of High Street regeneration was picked up by both Jay Gort of Gort Scott and Jan Kattein Architects who presented nuanced mapping studies of this mainstay of London's urban geography. Gort cited statistics which demonstrate that over half of Londoners do not leave their local area daily. Kattein's first high street study focused on Leyton in the run up to the Olympics; the practice has subsequently studied 16 further high streets..

Kirsten Henson of KLH Sustainability (ex-London 2012) enthusiastically conveyed her engineering-based approach to changing mindsets by moving away from BREEAM checklists towards 'closing the loop', exemplified in her current work for the Crown Estate, where timber from the Crown woodlands in Windsor is used for joinery in London projects.



R-Urban's community hub in Paris suburb, Colombes

Finally, Sheffield tutor Doina Petrusca of Paris-based R-Urban, presented a community hub project: market stalls cum allotment cum car boot recycling in the northwestern Paris suburb of Colombes. Closer to home, Nicolas Henninger of EXYZT presented 'Making Space in Dalston' an Olympic fringe project, developed in collaboration with MUF.

With the exception of SkyCycle, what these proposals shared was a community-based approach to sustainability, often employing temporary uses to nurture gradual change.

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